

SUSTAINING THE NATIONAL GUARD AS AN OPERATIONAL FORCE

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ABSTRACT

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The 2008 directive from Secretary Gates to transform the National Guard into an operational force has strategic implications. Events of September 11, 2001 thrust the National Guard into the global engagement with our enemies, and the Guard has proven itself in this role. The anticipated long term nature of this conflict has resulted in force level requirements that will continue to rely on the National Guard. This paper examines the way forward to sustain the National Guard as an operational force and also reveals this as an efficient way to balance end strength requirements with an increasingly constrained national defense budget by leveraging the cost savings realized for National Guard versus active component forces. Three specific recommendations are provided concerning the sustainment of National Guard forces in this operational role. These recommendations include a commitment to providing adequate resourcing of full time manning, employing the Guard in accordance with the ARFORGEN model, and ensuring that units have all required individual equipment for pre-mobilization training. A cultural change is also required for National Guard resourcing to reflect that of an operational force, in which the mutually dependent nature of the AC-RC and total force integration is manifested.

SUSTAINING THE NATIONAL GUARD AS AN OPERATIONAL FORCE

Since 2001 the military has used the National Guard continuously in a role that can be characterized as that of an operational force both at home and abroad. This has taken place in the context of a global war against the enemies of the U.S. and our allies, a conflict which is expected to continue into the foreseeable future. For over eight years the National Guard has been employed as an integrated partner with the active component in all global combat and stability operations, but the resourcing and full integration required to sustain Guard forces for the long term in this role has lagged behind. The 2008 Final Report of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve summarized these challenges:

Given the threats that the United States faces at home and abroad, the looming fiscal challenges the nation confronts, the projected demands for forces, the unique capabilities resident in the reserve components, and their cost effectiveness, the Commission sees no reasonable alternative to an increased use of and reliance on the reserve components. This conclusion is not dependent on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq...¹

DOD Directive 1200.17 was provided on October 29, 2008 by the Secretary of Defense. This directive tasked the service secretaries to formally implement the transformation of the reserve components into a truly operational force.² This official decision to make this transformation a reality has strategic implications for the nation. Fully integrating and resourcing the National Guard as an operational force will ensure that the nation can sustain the larger ground force end strength requirements of the 21st century while also balancing these force requirements against increasingly severe national fiscal constraints. A significant cost savings is realized for National Guard units compared to active component forces when they are employed within predictable planning parameters.

Additionally, utilizing the citizen-Soldiers of the National Guard from across America's local communities in this operational role ensures that the military will provide the visibility, balance, and accountability to the American public for any long term military action. This civil-military relationship is critical to not only holding national leadership accountable, but also serves a positive function by enhancing public understanding of any long term use of military force by the nation.

The ability to sustain the Guard in this operational role for the long term into this century requires a paradigm and policy shift in how the National Guard is trained, funded, and sourced into the total force. This paper will recommend several policy reforms required to make certain that an operational National Guard is sustainable. A cultural change within the DOD is also required regarding National Guard resourcing in order to truly reflect that of an operational force, in which the mutually dependent nature of the AC-RC and total force integration is manifested.

Air Force General Craig R. McKinley, current director of the National Guard, recently summarized this challenge to balance missions with tighter budgets. On September 14, 2009 he made the following comments:

We're going to go through a period of time of contracting resources...We're also going to be involved in an era of persistent conflict. General Casey (Army Chief of Staff) thinks we'll have between 10 and 15 brigades constantly deployed for the next 10 to 15 years. So how do you balance it out—era of persistent conflict and beginning an era of dwindling resources? ³

His words reflect the reality that the National Guard has been and will continue to be an integral part of military operations both abroad and on the domestic front, while the nation is now moving into an era of diminishing budgetary resources. The National Guard has clearly proven to be a relevant and viable partner within the overall spectrum

of global operations for the past eight years. In fact, all 34 Army Guard combat brigades have been deployed overseas, an indication that there has been a de facto shift from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve component. As an example, the Guard has provided nearly half of the troops that have served in Iraq.⁴

This de facto shift to an operational force must be followed by tangible changes in how the National Guard is actually manned, trained, deployed, and equipped. There must be corresponding changes to policies, directives, and budget or this transition from a strategic reserve to operational force will not be sustained. A Defense Department report to Congress in March 2007 stated that: “We believe that the current posture and utilization of the National Guard...as an “operational reserve” is not sustainable over time, and if not corrected with significant change to law and policy, the reserve components’ ability to serve our nation will diminish.”⁵

The 2008 final report to Congress and the Secretary of Defense by the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves stated clearly that: “ There is no reasonable alternative to the nation’s continuing increased reliance on the reserve components for missions at home and abroad,” and also acknowledged that the current method of using the reserve component is not sustainable. Reforming policy and law will be required to make certain that an operational reserve is sustainable.⁶

Before describing the way forward, it is important to determine what the definition of an operational force is, as it is being described within this research. The National Guard’s senior Army leadership recently defined an Operational Reserve Force as:

A reserve of operational capabilities organized and resourced in a recurrent predictable cycle to support Army requirements, in peace and war; an Operational Reserve force is fully manned, equipped, and trained to provide ready units across the full spectrum of operations.⁷

This definition is worthwhile in several respects. First, it captures the essence of the term as it is focused on readiness for all operations. Guard forces must be prepared to support all missions required globally by combatant commanders while always being prepared to be the military first responders for Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) missions in support of homeland defense operations. Second, the fundamentals of this research, that of adequate resourcing and of operational deployments based upon a predictable cycle, are prominent in this definition. National Guard forces must now be better resourced, trained, and available than they have ever been expected to be.

This is particularly critical during the “available-pool” timeframe late in the rotational cycle for Title 10 war fighting missions (years 4-5 of the Army Force Generation process known as ARFOGEN), and as a constant requirement (not tied to ARFORGEN) to be capable of responding to DSCA and homeland defense missions. It is important to note the inherent conflict in this cycle for Guard forces. The ARFORGEN rotational model is relevant for Federal missions which are typically planned in advance and managed in terms of planning years through the “patch-charts” which show unit rotational timing. It cannot account for the ever present requirement to respond to short notice homeland defense missions across a spectrum from terrorist attacks to natural disaster scenarios. This adds a unique aspect to the use of the Guard as an operational force which must be considered.

Background: Fiscal and Civil-Military Realities of the 21st Century

Employing the National Guard in an operational role must be an integral part of the nation’s defense planning. The uncertain nature of the strategic environment in this century, with both domestic and global threats, makes the Guard a relevant and wise

use of our nation's resources. A Congressional and Government Accountability Office (GAO) cost analysis concluded in 2008 that an active component service member costs an average of four times as much as a reserve component service member when not activated. This cost advantage must be considered as a part of our policymaking now, as we will continue to face unpredictable threats at home and globally into the future.

The per capita annual cost of active duty manpower has risen from \$96,000 to more than \$126,000 since 2000, owing largely to increases in such deferred benefits as health care, as well as to the expense of recruiting, retention and other initiatives to maintain an all-volunteer force strained by prolonged conflict. From a cost perspective, the reserve components remain a significant bargain for the taxpayer in comparison to the active component.⁸

An all volunteer force can only be maintained with a competitive pay and benefits package that can attract and retain service members. Over eight years of combat operations have had a huge financial cost, in addition to the sacrifices made by service members and families. Pay and benefits today are among the best compensation packages in the nation. These factors and the budgetary strains of sustaining sufficient force structure to meet requirements will persist well into this century. If federal revenue and the economy were growing at rates similar to the growth of defense expenditures, the fiscal pressure would be diminished.⁹ This is simply not the case, resulting in this time of unprecedented budgetary pressures to be fiscally efficient.

It is inevitable that the defense budget will erode in the coming years. Political considerations mean that Congress will be hesitant to cut many parts of the defense budget due to the significant political risks associated with such moves. They will also be under pressure to counter the growing federal deficit which has reached an unprecedented level, exceeding 1.42 trillion dollars this fiscal year and with \$190 billion spent in interest alone this year.¹⁰

Today more than ever, it is imperative to maintain the required military strength to defend the nation, balanced with this need to be efficient stewards of national financial resources. Defense Department guidance provided in 2008 specifically states: “Assigned missions shall be accomplished using the least costly mix of personnel (military, civilian, and contract) consistent with military requirements.”¹¹ The National Guard provides a force that best balances these competing forces of mission and end strength requirements, with a clear cost savings.

Effectively using the National Guard should be a fundamental part of U.S. defense policy. The cost of each service’s respective reserve component prior to mobilization is approximately five percent of each service’s total budget. This makes the Guard the best means to meet military manpower requirements in this time of uncertainty and increased security commitments, while also keeping the costs to sustain this force level far below that required of a much larger active force.¹²

Another benefit to the nation in using National Guard forces in an operational role is that it has a positive impact on domestic Civil-Military relations, and supports the concept of the Abrams Doctrine developed by General Creighton Abrams after the Vietnam War. Essentially this policy was developed by General Abrams when he was the Army Chief of Staff, in response to the manner in which the Johnson administration managed this war. Several layers of checks and balances regarding the use of military force were avoided by the Johnson administration by its refusal to mobilize a significant number of Guard and Reserve forces.¹³ While there were a small percentage of Guard units and individuals mobilized, it was not visible to the public nor to most of the government and so had little positive impact.

The deployment of National Guard units forces the political interaction and involvement of Senators, members of Congress, and state governments as notifications of mobilizations are provided to state governors and legislators. This process ensures visibility among a state's political powers, constituents, and service members' families in the local communities. One school of thought maintains that avoiding the use of reserve component forces in any significant numbers in Vietnam was a break with doctrine and tradition from previous wars, and helped to create a climate of alienation among the public towards the war.¹⁴

While this may be a gross over simplification of the issue, the benefits created for the nation when including the reserve components in any major deployment are significant. This helps to ensure that the voice of the people will be accounted for and that public understanding of the war will be enhanced. The means to this end was the formal establishment in 1970 of the Total Force Policy, including deliberate force structure decisions to force a mutual reliance between active and reserve component forces so that no significant deployment could occur without the Guard and Reserve.¹⁵

The popular support and involvement by the public during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm was a manifestation of this enhanced public ownership and accountability created when the National Guard is mobilized. The deployment of so many reserve component service members was a source of pride and ownership for the average American, and it served as a forcing function for state executive and legislative leadership to maintain a level of visibility, public discourse, and approval for this use of force. Simply put, it ensured that local communities where the Guard or Reserve units were located had a certain level of awareness and connection to the deployments.

The public deserves the clear ability to maintain visibility of sending our military into conflicts. The continued adherence to the Abrams Doctrine is a relevant means to that end. The National Guard, in its employment as an operational force, ensures that this visibility is maintained.

The policy of the United States must be that we will not embark on major combat operations without the support of our citizens. History shows their support is best obtained by ensuring they have a direct and personal stake in the war effort. If that effort is right and just- if it passes a “common sense test”- the American people have shown that they will support it. ¹⁶

Can the Guard be sustained as an operational reserve in order to meet all mission requirements at home and abroad throughout the 21st century? The answer to this question is clearly that yes it can, but only if the ongoing problems in the following three critical areas are addressed now. The sustainment of a fully capable and operational National Guard is dependent upon resolving problems with full time manning, the need for a predictable rotational process, and the resolution of individual equipment fielding shortages.

Full Time Manning

Action is required now to fully resource full time manning (FTM) if we are to sustain the National Guard’s ability to continue to operate in an operational role. The Guard’s Readiness Centers (or armories) which house the units across the nation are manned and operated daily by a staff of full time members of the units. These full time personnel, usually a mix of Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) and uniformed dual status Civil Servants (military technicians), have always been vital to the ability of a Guard unit to manage and prepare training, conduct administrative and maintenance functions, recruit, coordinate mobilization and homeland defense requirements, and manage the large volume of information and requirements that units receive daily.

FTM requirements may surge upwards during the years a unit is considered in the available pool for deployment, and there may be some support for surging a portion of FTM levels between units as they move across the ARFORGEN cycle. This argument fails to recognize the many second and third order effects this would create however. Branch and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) qualifications may not transfer between various units in the rotational cycle, placing unqualified personnel in units. Additionally, the significant training and resourcing requirements for units during the Reset and Train phase after a deployment cannot be accomplished without a competent and fully manned full time force. Most significantly, this force now operates in a post 9-11 world in which there is a real homeland defense terrorist threat. The Guard is now expected to be trained and available on a short notice to respond to a catastrophic attack on the homeland, while always being on short notice for response to a variety of other natural and man-made scenarios as well. The importance of a fully resourced FTM force in all units is now more relevant than ever.

The Pentagon's fiscal 2009 budget increased resourcing of full time manning up to about 68 percent of what the Army said the Guard needed during the last FTM assessment, which was conducted in 1999.¹⁷ This effectively forces units to sustain day to day capabilities as an operational force during a period of persistent conflict, deployments, and increased threats to homeland security, but with less FTM than the Army believed was needed when the Guard was employed as a strategic reserve.

Shortages of full time support staff is one of the main concerns for Guard leadership in maintaining readiness during this time of increased requirements. This growth must continue in order to ensure and sustain the transition of the Guard from a

strategic reserve status to that of an operational force. The following chart reflects the significance of the full time manning shortages across the Army National Guard as documented in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008.¹⁸

Authorized End Strength	AGR Required	AGR Authorized	Military Technicians Required	Military Technicians Authorized
351,300	42, 482	29,204	42,329	26,502

Figure 1: FY 2008 Army National Guard Full Time Support

General Casey recently asked senior Guard leadership what would be needed to complete the conversion of the National Guard to an operational force. The answer provided was this: To eliminate the severe shortage of full time manning.¹⁹ This would in turn have a positive impact on the quality of pre-mobilization training and so reduce training time after units are mobilized, improve maintenance status, and provide better care for unit members through such actions as timely resolution of pay and promotions. Inadequate full time support has an unacceptable impact on readiness that is contradictory to sustaining an available and ready operational force.

There is no state, no National Guard unit that is not short of full-time manning right now. This is our biggest readiness need and that's our biggest resource need, especially if we are going to deliver the kind of readiness the American people expect of their National Guard...So we have really got to adjust to the new modern realities.²⁰

The FY 2009 Defense Authorization Bill signed in October, 2008 continued the gradual progress being made for FTM needs. It authorized an additional 3,564 full time support personnel for the Army National Guard.²¹ This is the largest increase in Army Guard AGR force authorization in 22 years, and a clear move in the right direction. This increase still does not provide the numbers needed to sustain operational readiness.²²

Potential solutions could be enhanced by initiating a study which relooks full time manning needs and provides data to support a more appropriate manning level across the Guard. Such a study reflecting the operational tempo and rotational nature of the post 9-11 era is currently lacking. A manpower study that provides this accurate assessment of full time manning requirements for an operational versus strategic reserve force should be used to determine new authorizations, and these should be submitted in the 2012-2017 Program Objective Memorandum (POM).

In addition, adjusting the uniform readiness reporting standards to account for reserve component full time manning and related impacts under the four subcategories of data (personnel, training, equipment and supplies on hand, and equipment condition) would help gain an accurate picture of FTM impacts on readiness. The current system fails to take into account the level of full-time support and overlooks the impacts this has on keeping Guard units in a mission-ready status for training, equipment, and maintenance. Readiness reporting systems should be expanded to capture full time manning impacts.²³

The foundation of the National Guard's ability to sustain itself in an operational role is built upon an adequate force of full time personnel. Increased operational and administrative requirements in the current environment can only be sustained with adequate full time manning. While there has been clear success recently in increasing the size and resourcing of the full time force, unit readiness cannot wait on the currently approved plan of reaching the minimum required full time manning levels on a gradual ramp spread across many years.

Rotational Predictability

Historically, National Guard units serving in their previous role as a strategic reserve were able to train and plan for mobilization on a relatively predictable annual schedule with a larger amount of planning and reaction time built into the planning cycle. As a result of the unanticipated requirements of the post- 9-11 era, Guard units have had to operate within an often unpredictable training and deployment cycle that has placed a strain on the units, families, and civilian employers. In fact, operational requirements have spread the Guard across missions from the Balkans, Guantanamo Bay, Iraq, The Sinai, Afghanistan, and other locations so much that the former deputy director of G-3 operations for the integration of the National Guard and Reserves summarized the situation as follows: “There are three types of reserve-component units, those that are deployed, those that are returning home, and those that are preparing for deployment.”²⁴

This situation cannot be sustained indefinitely without dire impacts on retention, readiness, wartime missions, and on the ability of the governors of the states to provide homeland defense forces. The solution exists now through the Army Force Generation Model (ARFORGEN), which provides a predictable rotational model for both active and reserve component forces. It is intended to create a rotational cycle in which units can plan for three phases of activity with predictability. This is vital to the Guard’s ability to sustain an operational capability over time because it allows not only unit members, but more importantly family members and civilian employers to understand and manage the disruptions caused by their Guardsmen being called to duty. Families and civilian employers make enormous sacrifices to support these Guardsmen, and are the

foundation to ensuring that the Guard can be sustained in an operational role. Without their support, this role will be a short lived and ineffective one.

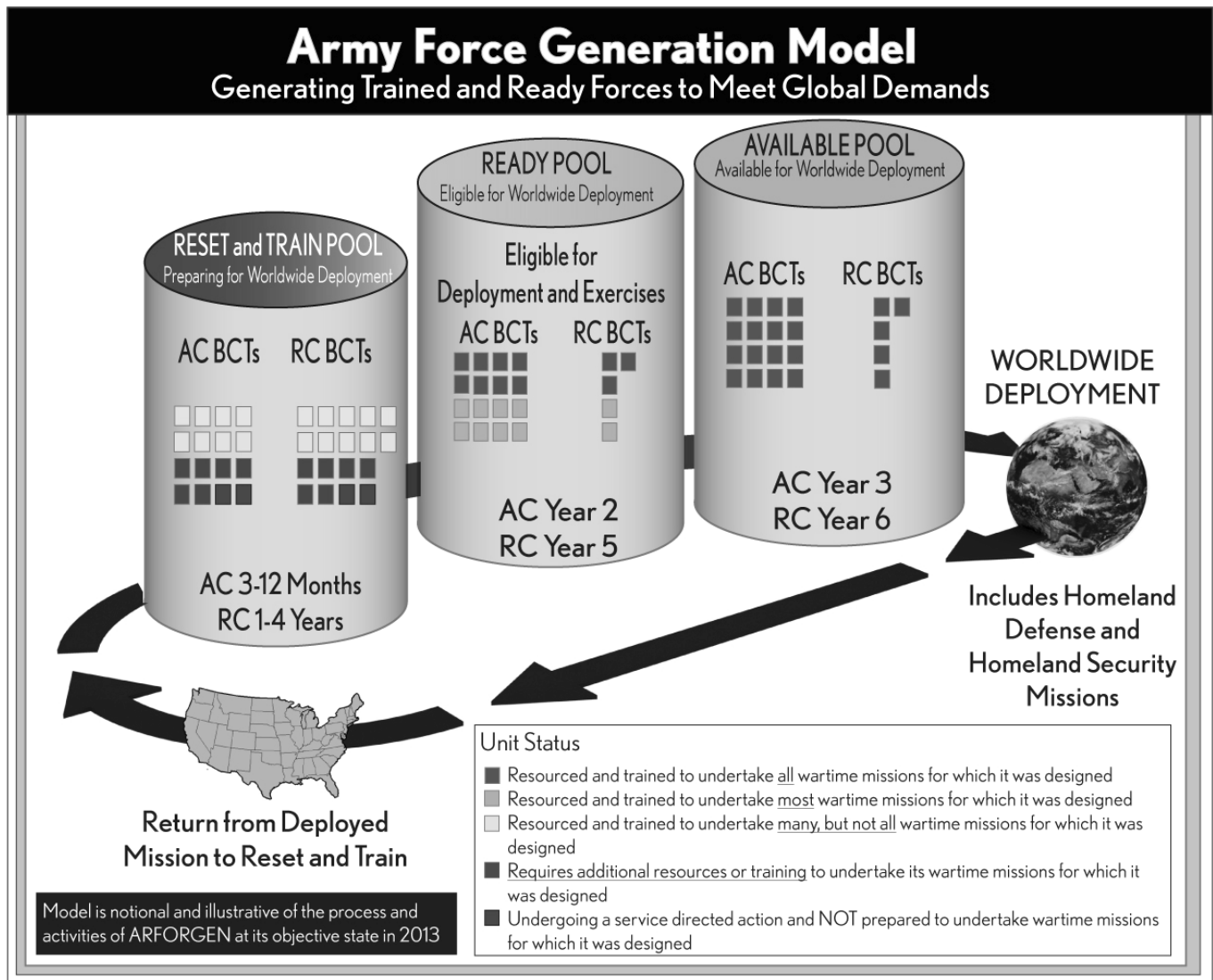


Figure 2: ARFORGEN Process

The ARFORGEN model is based on three force pool phases for a unit, to include a Reset, Train-Ready, and Available phase. The intent for both active component and reserve component forces is to provide a sustained level of ready, trained units in a predictable model. For the Guard, the intent of ARFORGEN is to establish a rotational

ratio of boots on the ground (BOG) time to dwell time (at home station) of one year to four with the optimal goal being one to five. This focuses units against missions as early as possible, supports the demand for forces within this era of persistent conflict, and ensures that access to an operational reserve component force can be sustained.²⁵

By adhering to the ARFORGEN model, the predictability and stability for unit level rotational deployments is achieved. This gives the Guardsman and employer time to prepare and negotiate details concerning the absence of that employee, greatly decreasing potential conflicts and stress on both parties. One of the key concerns cited by employers of Guardsmen is that of the uncertainty about the timing and duration of mobilizations.²⁶ This uncertainty must be addressed through predictability. The partnership and trust between civilian employers and Guard members is critical. This trust is compromised by short notice, repeated deployments which do not allow planning for such actions as hiring temporary workers or shifting and training other personnel to cover the responsibilities of a deployed employee.

It is important to note that this system is unit based, not individual. For the Guard just as for the AC, this means that even while unit level predictability is improved with ARFORGEN, individual service members who move between units which are at different rotational phases may not enjoy the same predictability. Cross leveling of personnel and natural career related moves across units will continue to be a challenge for individuals, employers, and families across the Guard despite the improvements that may come from an adherence to the ARFORGEN process.

The demands on combatant commanders and the limitations on the size of the active force require the employment of Guard forces as part of the operational force.

Long term access to Guard forces is necessary in order to sustain current operations and potential future requirements, and this requirement can be met by an adherence to ARFORGEN. Giving a Guard unit a planning factor of a one year deployment followed by a four to five year period of reset and training ensures that this operational requirement can be met. Figure 2 (above) reflects the current goal of a 1:5 year predictable rotational ratio for reserve component forces. The following description clarifies the three phases of this process:

Reset, a period in which the unit undergoes soldier-family reintegration, staffing and equipping regeneration, and limited individual training, which provides a unit capable of performing civil support operations; Train/Ready, characterized by collective training and the progressive build-up of readiness to accomplish less complex missions while ultimately achieving a capability to conduct full spectrum operations; and Available, a period during which the unit is at its highest state of readiness and is either deployed or is ready to deploy worldwide to conduct full spectrum operations.²⁷

In addition to providing a predictable process that allows for the sustainment of National Guard forces in an operational role, the ARFORGEN process also ensures that the fiscal benefits gained from a dependence on the Guard, as described earlier in this paper, are maintained. A 2008 RAND study of the relative costs of reserve component versus active component forces indicated that a Guard unit not deployed costs 25 percent of what an AC unit costs. This cost factor assumes that AC costs are constant no matter the deployment status, and also that when a Guard unit is mobilized its costs are the same as an AC unit for administrative purposes.²⁸ More frequent mobilizations obviously decrease the cost savings of the Guard.

Within the current ARFORGEN rotational policy, the costs of the Guard in relation to the costs of the AC rise from 25 percent to 41 percent.²⁹ While still a significant savings of nearly 60 percent, this cost benefit continues to decline as the

frequency of mobilizations increases. The ability to truly adhere to the ARFORGEN process thus far has not been achieved despite progress that has been made toward this goal. This has meant that many Guard units continue to redeploy well inside of the intended four or five year dwell time. In turn, this increases relative costs above the 41 percent level noted here and degrades the cost benefits normally realized with the National the Guard.

The Secretary of the Army has set a goal of full implementation of ARFORGEN for not later than 2011. This will align units or “flags” within the rotational cycle. This model is built on the assumption of mission predictability that allows force structure to be balanced with the demand for forces, and does not fully account for a potential surge in demand for forces. Despite this, this rotational model is an enhancement to previous rotational practices and finally creates a certain level of predictability that is imperative to any sustained rotational effort of units.

The intent of these changes is clear: to establish a predictable rotational cycle for RC units of one year on active duty followed by at least four (and ideally five) years of duty at home. The ability of the National Guard to continue to provide the capabilities and forces needed by our nation, and to pass on the fiscal savings inherent in the use of the RC, is dependent on achieving this predictable and sustainable rotation policy.³⁰

Individual Equipment

In January 2007 the Secretary of Defense changed the mobilization policy for reserve component units to a shorter 12 month mobilization period, meaning that a Guard unit now would be required to maximize completion of training requirements against a more limited mobilization time window. This is significant because it creates a tension between completing the training tasks required by a combatant commander

against getting the unit into theater and in a BOG (Boots on the Ground) status as quickly as possible. Prior to this policy, a Guard unit would typically have four to six months at a mobilization training site to complete all training in a post-mobilization status, followed by a full 12 months of BOG in theater. This new policy shifted mobilization training requirements from the post-mobilization to the pre-mobilization period, in order to allow the units to spend less time at a mobilization training site and more time actually on the ground conducting its mission.

In 2008 the Army Chief of Staff directed that pre-mobilization training be certified by the individual State Adjutants General (AG) and then validated by National Guard Bureau and accepted by First Army when the units arrive at their mobilization training sites.³¹ This has direct relevance to the long term sustainment of the Guard in an operational role. Shifting training completion and validation to the period prior to a Guard unit's departure for its mobilization station greatly increases pre-mobilization training requirements. Failure to maximize this pre-mobilization training time at home station and to also reduce training time required in the post-mobilization period, will adversely impact unit availability in theater to conduct operations. In the end, this situation makes it difficult to sustain the use of Guard forces to support a combatant commander.

There are certainly a variety of equipment related issues that are relevant, but only one will be addressed in this paper. Examples of issues not addressed here include employing the Pre-Mobilization and Post-Mobilization Training EXORD 150-08 as a framework for training, or the problems created for deploying commanders in determining unit equipment and training needs based on Military Table of Equipment

(MTOE) versus Mission Essential Equipment List (MEEL) requirements. Another is the problems created when units face shortages of certain major end item equipment such as up-armored vehicles or pacing items.³²

This paper will instead make the case that at a minimum; the equipment issue that must be resolved now in order to ensure success in pre-mobilization training is that units must have on hand all individual protective equipment, individual weapons, optics, night vision, and crew served weapons for a minimum of one year prior to the scheduled deployment date. Without this, a unit's ability to train and validate on both individual and collective tasks during the pre-mobilization training period is compromised.

The Army Audit Agency conducted a study of four National Guard units conducting both pre-mobilization and post-mobilization training in 2008. The intent of the audit was to determine if units were able to efficiently execute training plans during pre-mobilization. Specific training tasks that were reviewed included Warrior Tasks (weapons qualification, communication, movement techniques during urban operations, and navigation training), Battle Drills (reaction to contact, indirect fire, chemical attack, and ambush), and finally Theater Specific Required Training (code of conduct, personnel recovery, combat stress, suicide prevention).³³

It is important to note that none of the tasks in the first two categories (Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills) can be conducted and validated if not completed with the individual equipment and weapons that will be carried and used by Soldiers in theater. This is a non-negotiable standard that cannot be waived by the state AG's or by First Army. When individual equipment that is required in theater such as weapons, optics, and night vision devices, and individual body armor is not available during pre-

mobilization training time, the training events conducted cannot be validated and will not be accepted by First Army at the mobilization station. As an example, if individual weapons qualification is conducted prior to arrival at the mobilization station without the weapon's optics or while not wearing the required body armor, then the qualification does not count towards validation for deployment. This means that the unit will be forced to complete those training tasks again at the mobilization station after being issued the authorized equipment, cutting into the BOG time available for the unit in theater and wasting training time.

Of the four units in this study, none were able to complete all of the planned pre-mobilization tasks, creating frustrations for the units and the First Army staff required to validate them for missions in theater. One of the main causes cited was the inability of the units to obtain the necessary equipment required for pre-mobilization training. For example, the 228th MP Company did not receive its authorized M240B machine guns until arrival at the mobilization station, meaning that all familiarization, training and qualification with this weapon had to be conducted as post-mobilization training and resulting in a loss of valuable and limited training time. This training would have been validated prior to arrival at the mobilization station had it been available when needed.³⁴

In March of 2009 the 32nd IBCT from the Wisconsin National Guard arrived at Fort Bliss Texas to conduct post-mobilization training for their mission in Iraq. However, it was not until day two at Fort Bliss that the Soldiers were issued required individual clothing and equipment, to include their individual body armor, and not until day three that they were issued their authorized individual weapons.³⁵ This unit trained for this deployment for over one year prior to its arrival at Fort Bliss, but much of the value of

that training and also the valuable time at the mobilization site, was lost due to the lack of key equipment on hand for pre-mobilization training.

Many Guard units continue to have non-deployable and legacy equipment on hand. The percentage of National Guard units reported at the lowest level of equipment readiness actually increased by a factor of nine between 2002 and 2009. Night vision equipment, crew served weapons, small arms, individual protective gear, and tactical radios are key shortage areas that also impact individual Soldier training. In December 2007, Lieutenant General Speaks reported that the Army National Guard had 75 percent of its equipment on hand, and that only 55 percent of that equipment was modernized equipment. If current budget plans are adhered to, the Army's reserve components should be equipped to a C-1 level of 90 percent by 2019.³⁶ The following chart presents the total dollar value of the equipment required by the reserve components and currently planned in the federal budget through 2013. It demonstrates that while funding is increasing, there are still significant shortages.³⁷ See Figure 3.

TOE Requirement		Modern Items on Hand	Planned Reset and Pass-downs from AC	Programmed Funding, 2008-13	Unfunded Requirement
ARNG	104.60	33.20	26.00	21.50	23.90
USAR	27.70	9.50	2.15	5.50	10.55

Figure 3: Army Equipment funding overview to 2013 (in billions of dollars)

This indicates that the current strategy of equipping units just prior to deployment, and the forced cross leveling of equipment between units and states, will have to continue for the next decade. Taking this long to resolve equipment shortages creates unacceptable risks for unit readiness and will continue to hamper the success of pre-mobilization training and unit deployment validation.

Figure 4 below shows the degree of equipment shortages for all reserve component forces in fiscal year 2008. This clearly demonstrates that the most severe equipment shortages across the entire reserve component fall within the Army National Guard, with a shortage of nearly 45 percent.³⁸

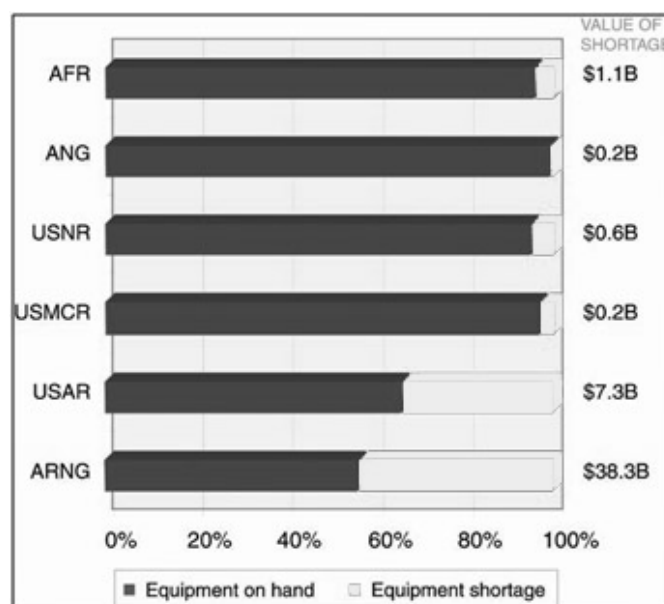


Figure 4: Reserve Component Equipment Shortages, 2008 (by percent)

In 2007 Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum, then director of National Guard Bureau, summarized this problem in his testimony to Congress:

If we are to be successful in our goal of providing our Soldiers a shorter total mobilization period and maximize time in theater for the combatant commanders, it is imperative that we reduce post-mobilization training time prior to deployment and accomplish more of it at home station prior to the mobilization to active duty. We need the equipment to do that training. If units train regularly at home with the best equipment, then little is needed in the post-mobilization period immediately prior to deployment.³⁹

The National Guard requires the modernized equipment that it is authorized and which it will go to war or conduct homeland defense missions with. It must be fielded at a level that ensures that modular units with increased equipment authorizations can train with the right equipment. America cannot afford to treat equipment modernization

of the National Guard lightly. Failure to address this problem now will have significant adverse impacts on the ability of National Guard forces to sustain an operational capability.

Cultural Change and the Way Forward

Transforming and more critically sustaining the National Guard as a fully operational force will require a cultural change within the Department of Defense which focuses on the mutual dependency of the AC and RC. “To successfully transform itself, DOD must overcome cultural resistance to change...that became well rooted in the Cold War era.”⁴⁰ One positive aspect of the past eight years of successful employment of the National Guard into global operations is the increased level of trust among Army leaders in the ability of Guard leaders to train their Soldiers and to conduct operations. Until recently many units have had to repeat pre-mobilization tasks they had completed at home station upon arrival at a mobilization station, frustrating Soldiers and reducing available time to conduct collective training at the mobilization station. The recent decision by the Army Chief of Staff to accept individual state Adjutant General’s validation of individual pre-mobilization tasks is certainly an example of a pragmatic response to the Secretary of Defense’s policy change for RC mobilization length. More importantly, it also reflects the gradual and positive cultural change taking place within the Total Force.⁴¹

The shift to continuous operational participation has not been accompanied by changes in funding, personnel policies, training, and the providing of necessary equipment. Congress must fund the National Guard at the level required for personnel increases, full time manning, and equipment procurement.⁴² Mutual dependency between the AC and RC, both of which contribute their unique strengths and capabilities

to our nation's security, must replace competition for resources. The goal should be to make the interaction between them seamless, and as stated in the 2008 CNGR report to Congress: "...the active and reserve components must increase their military effectiveness by becoming a more integrated total force." ⁴³

The National Guard will continue to play a pivotal role in the protection of America both at home and around the globe in support of contingency operations. The purpose of this paper has not been to analyze or debate all of the many policy and resourcing changes that may be required to sustain the National Guard in its operational role. Neither has it been to debate which mission sets may be most appropriate to the Guard. It has been to call for an emphasis by DOD and Congress on fixing several recommended focus areas, and the need for continued progress in changing the culture within the DOD, as the foundations to the Guard's continued success as an operational force.

There is an immediate requirement to address the three primary problems outlined in this paper if the nation expects the National Guard to effectively sustain a global operational capability while maintaining the capability for domestic security missions as well. The immediate problems that must be resolved, that of adequate Full Time Manning, adherence to a predictable rotational model, and a comprehensive plan to equip units with modern equipment, will have strategic effects for the nation. The National Guard is prepared to continue in its proven capability to be an integral part of the nation's defense into the 21st century. The ability to sustain an operational National Guard which can meet the nation's security expectations over the long term is now

dependent on the will of our national leadership. The commitment is needed now to provide the resources and support as the means to this end.

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